

The Future Role of Army National Guard Special Forces

by

Lieutenant Colonel James M. Jones
United States Army National Guard



United States Army War College
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Lieutenant Colonel James M. Jones
United States Army National Guard

Colonel William R. Griffin
Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

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For the past ten years, Army National Guard (ARNG) Special Forces (SF) soldiers have been operating alongside their Active Component Special Forces brothers in both Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the operational force. These ARNG soldiers have achieved a readiness level comparable with the AC in training, equipment and personnel. However, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is drawing down and America is facing an economic recession resulting in the ARNG SF once again becoming a strategic reserve. This in turn is dramatically affecting the ARNG SF units in areas of readiness, morale and retention. An appropriate alternative must be determined to overcome this transformation.

The Future Role of Army National Guard Special Forces

Since the surprise Terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, Army National Guard (ARNG) Special Forces (SF) soldiers have been operating as part of the U.S. military's operational force alongside their Active Component (AC) SF brothers. Prior to this attack, ARNG SF soldiers were part of the strategic reserve and not often utilized. Since the initial activation of ARNG SF in November of 2001 for combat operations in Afghanistan, there has been no disparity in the scope or duration of deployments or types of missions conducted in either Iraq or Afghanistan by both the AC SF and the ARNG SF. In many cases, the soldiers from the ARNG SF were more successful in their missions than the soldiers from the AC SF due to their positive attitudes and resourceful nature derived from their civilian occupations.

The war in Iraq is over and the war in Afghanistan is slowly drawing down. The war fighting operating tempo (OPTEMPO) for the ARNG SF has come to a dramatic standstill aside from a few soldiers filling vacancies for the AC SF. Currently, no ARNG SF units are scheduled in the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) playbook. This document schedules SF units for mobilizations for the next three years. As a matter of fact, there is no plan to input any ARNG SF unit on the wartime playbook at this time. This is due in part to a negative attitude towards ARNG SF by various AC SF leaders within the SF community and Army in general. Many senior policy makers and active-duty officers remain uninformed about the Army National Guard and Reserves through ignorance and a lack of interest. This is a result of lingering anti National Guard and Reserve bias among some Title 10 active duty personnel and this lack of awareness damages active and reserve unity by stifling improvements.¹

Conversely, the AC SF elements are maneuvering among themselves to better align their units for deployment to Afghanistan. As the war draws down in Afghanistan, there is less need at this time for the amount of SF soldiers to be operating there. This new development causes the question to be asked, what is the future role of ARNG SF? To more thoroughly examine this question and provide insightful, potential answers we should first look at the history, composition, and doctrinal missions of U.S. Army Special Forces.

History of Special Forces

The United States Army Special Forces, also known throughout the world as the “Green Berets” originated from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a US wartime Intelligence agency which was formed and operated during World War II (WWII). The primary mission of the OSS was unconventional warfare (UW), special reconnaissance (SR) and direct action (DA). One of the major activities of the OSS was conducting espionage activities behind enemy lines which had a dramatic effect on the enemy’s morale and contributed to the overall success of the US and its wartime allies in WWII.

The founding father of modern Special Forces was Colonel Aaron Bank (November 23, 1902 – April 01, 2004) who served with the OSS during World War II and afterwards became the Commander of the first Special Forces Group, Airborne, designated as the 10th SFG(A) at Fort Bragg, NC in June of 1952. The Psychological Warfare School now called the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School was established during the same time. This school was created to train SF soldiers to successfully conduct unconventional warfare in all regions of the world.

The “Green Beret” became much more of a symbol than a common headgear when President John F Kennedy visited Fort Bragg, NC on October 12, 1961. During

this visit he met with Brigadier General (BG) William P. Yarborough, Commander of US Army Special Forces at the time. President Kennedy asked BG Yarborough, “How do you like the Green Beret?” BG Yarborough replied, “They’re fine Sir. We wanted them a long time.”² Soon after this visit, President Kennedy officially authorized the Green Beret as the official headgear of the US Army Special Forces and these highly trained soldiers became known as the “The Green Berets.”

Composition of Special Forces

Currently there are five AC SF Groups and two ARNG SF Groups. Each group has a regional focus in order to maintain a successful operating standard in language, culture and military aspects of its assigned region. The AC Groups are the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, and 10th. The 1st SFG(A) is located at Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Washington and responsible for Pacific Command (PACOM) area of responsibility (AOR). The 3rd SFG(A) is located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and responsible for the sub-Saharan portion of Africa Command (AFRICOM) AOR. The 5th SFG(A) is located at Fort Campbell, Kentucky and responsible for Central Command (CENTCOM) AOR. The 7th SFG(A) is located at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and responsible for the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) AOR. The 10th SFG(A) is located at Fort Carson, Colorado and responsible for the European Command (EUCOM) AOR.

The ARNG Groups are the 19th and 20th SFG(A)s. The 19th SFG(A) was activated in May 1961 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The 19th SFG(A)’s directed training affiliation is with 1st SFG(A) for training and regional alignment. The 20th SFG(A) was activated in May of 1959 in Birmingham, Alabama. The 20th SFG(A)’s directed training affiliation is with 5th SFG(A) for training and regional alignment. Elements of these two NG groups are spread across the US from Texas to Rhode Island located in over 16

states. The composition of both components has changed numerous times throughout the years. There were also two US Army Reserve (USAR) SF Groups, 11th SFG(A) and 12th SFG(A) but these units were deactivated in 1994 due to substandard readiness levels.

Each SF Group is composed of three Battalions, and each is assigned three line companies, a support (SPT) company, and a Headquarters (HQ) company. The line companies, Alpha, Bravo and Charlie are each composed of six Operational Detachments Alpha Teams (ODAs). An ODA is by SF doctrine the smallest operating element of the SF community. It is composed of twelve men of various Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) and ranks. Each ODA has a commander who is a Captain designated 18A responsible for organizing the SFODA, mission, preparing the team and briefing the mission objective. The Executive Officer is a Chief Warrant Officer designated 180A who assists the Detachment Commander as the technical expert. An Operations Sergeant or Team Sergeant designated 18Z manages training and day to day operations. An Assistant Operations and Intelligence Sergeant designated 18F reviews intelligence from signal intelligence (SIGINT), human intelligence (HUMINT), and image intelligence (IMINT). The 18F also provides operational environment analysis valuable to forces throughout the theater. One senior, and one junior weapons Sergeant designated 18B, each operates and maintains a wide variety of U.S, allied, and other foreign weapons, and together they are responsible for the ODA security plan. One senior and one junior engineer Sergeant designated 18C specialize in a wide range of disciplines from demolitions and construction of field fortifications to logistical operations. One senior and one junior medical Sergeant

designated 18D represent the finest first-response/trauma medical technicians in the world. Primarily trained in trauma medicine, they also possess a working knowledge of dentistry, veterinary care, public sanitation, water quality and optometry. Finally, there is one senior and one junior communications Sergeant each designated 18E. They operate standard and non-standard communications gear encompassing systems from encrypted satellite communications systems to classical high-frequency Morse key systems.

The ODA can when necessary operate under a split-team concept as the situation dictates.³ In this configuration, the Commander and the XO split the ODA as the mission requires and each performs as an independent element. The Soldiers on an ODA will continue to advance their collective and individual skills throughout their careers. Along with their Individual Professional Development (IPD) or Non-commissioned Officer Professional Development (NCOPD) education which is required for all non-commissioned soldiers, SF soldiers must also train in areas such as parachuting operations (both static-line and military free-fall), language, advanced marksmanship and close quarters combat to name a few.

Doctrinal Missions of Special Forces

In working through and with partner nations, SF units gain access and placement in remote locations providing vital atmospherics to the geographical combatant commanders. The composition of an SFODA allows one twelve man element to develop, organize, equip, train, advise or direct indigenous forces up to Battalion size in Special Operations to deny violent extremist organization objectives. This represents a cost effective means to promote stability and encourage competent Partner Nations to

strengthen alliance cohesion which increases US influence and supports the guidance of the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF).

Army Special Forces currently perform the following eleven doctrinal missions:

- *Foreign Internal Defense* (FID) - Assist another government in any action program taken to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.
- *Unconventional Warfare* (UW) - Conduct a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations in enemy held, enemy controlled, or politically sensitive territory, primarily through the use of guerillas or other surrogate forces.
- *Special Reconnaissance* (SR) - Verify, through observation or other collection methods, information concerning enemy capabilities, intentions and activities in support of strategic/operational objectives or conventional forces.
- *Direct Action* (DA) - Seize, damage, or destroy a target: capture or recover personnel or material in support of strategic/operational objectives or conventional forces.
- *Information Operations* (IO) - Actions taken to achieve information superiority while defending one's own information and information systems.
- *Combating Terrorism* (CBT) - Preempt to resolve terrorist incidents.
- *Counter-proliferation* (CP) of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) - Combat proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, intelligence collection and analysis; and support of diplomacy, arms control, and export controls.
- *Security Force Assistance* (SFA) - Pertains to those DOD activities that contribute to unified action by the US government to support the development of

the capacity and capability of foreign security forces (FSF) and their supporting institutions.

- *Counterinsurgency* (COIN) - The comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat insurgency and to address any core grievances.
- *Military Information Support Operations* (MISO) - Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.
- *Civil affairs operations* (CAO) - Operations conducted by CA forces that enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in localities where military forces are present.⁴

Due to the types of training SF soldiers undergo, the size of their force, their cumulative age and maturity, as well as experience level, they are able to shape the battlefield in a way conventional forces (CF) cannot. Thereby, they are utilized in an operational and strategic mode to influence the outcome of war. Special Forces soldiers are “employed throughout the three stages of the Operational Continuum: peacetime, conflict, and war.”⁵

Special Operations require unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment, and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk.⁶

Special Forces are not a substitute for conventional forces; rather they enhance the effects of conventional forces. Whether SF operates independently or with other forces, they should be in a role that achieves synergy with the interagency effort that may otherwise be unobtainable. Inherent to SF is an ability to provide adaptable military responses in situations requiring tailored, precise, focused use of force in which risks and results are politically sensitive.⁷

Transformation

As the ARNG SF transitions back to the strategic reserve from the operational reserve, there is great risk in losing the skills and competencies developed and honed over the last 10 years in combat. The typical ARNG schedule of conducting one weekend drill a month and a two week annual training period can in no way make up for mobilizing and deploying to a combat zone for 12 months once every three years. A substantial substitute must be determined to make up for this critical difference in order to maintain relevancy both internally and externally. “When rebalancing the force to meet future national security challenges, the Guard and Reserve should be a “force of first choice” for those tasks for which they are particularly well suited, owing to their overall cost effectiveness and the skills that they can provide. Missions that follow a predictable, operational schedule fall clearly into this category.”⁸

This transition also has a direct effect upon the morale of these soldiers and retention within the ranks of ARNG SF units. For example, a soldier may spend upwards of three years to complete the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) at Fort Bragg, NC. Upon graduation, he has a burning desire to become an ODA member and participate in combat as an SF soldier. He feels the need to prove to himself and to his peers that he is worthy of wearing the coveted “Green Beret”. He also wants to test

all that he has worked so hard for and learned in the SFQC. This is an enduring problem for all SF leaders in the ARNG. At this time, there is no solution to this issue.

To better understand the situation, consider if you can how it would feel to be the only member of an ODA not to be wearing a Special Forces combat patch. Everyone else has learned the lessons that can only be learned in combat and they talk about the missions both successes and failures on a daily basis. The combat experienced soldiers tell the new “Green Beret” that his time in combat will come, but it does not come soon enough for him and he does not see any chance of going to combat with the current situation as it is. If these soldiers’ personal and professional needs are not met, they may decide to leave the ARNG in order to join the AC or leave the military altogether. The first choice is a loss to the ARNG and the second is a loss to the Army as a whole. Many ARNG SF soldiers have become discouraged with no mobilization in sight and have left the ARNG for civilian contracting jobs in Afghanistan and elsewhere. This has become a common occurrence within the ARNG and there is no absolute solution at this time. This affects the Army as a whole. Training an SF soldier is a long and expensive task. We can ill afford to continue this losing cycle. This strategic research paper will examine several relevant possibilities to address this issue.

Future Missions for ARNG SF

A scenario for ARNG SF absent of war is to continue to prepare for combat operations in ways that are also supporting other types of operations in both Title 32 and Title 10 status. This will take creativity, initiative and leadership among ARNG SF leaders. The reserve component possesses capabilities required for the types of operations that the U.S. military is likely to perform over the next 30 years. These forces are uniquely qualified to conduct irregular warfare and post-conflict stabilization

operations in failed or failing states, build security capacity to enhance the U.S. military's relationship and operate with allies to strengthen coalitions that prevent and deter conflict.⁹

Homeland Security (HS) is protecting our territory, population, and infrastructure at home by deterring against, and mitigating the effects of all threats to U.S. sovereignty; supporting civil authorities in crisis and consequences management; and helping to ensure the availability, integrity, survivability and adequacy of critical national assets.¹⁰ The ARNG is the logical element of the U.S. armed forces to act as the lead military agency for homeland security (HS). This type of mission is conducted by the ARNG on a regular basis however it is seldom used by the AC. In homeland security, the military aids civil authorities or other federal agencies with logistical and other support in disaster relief missions after hurricanes, tornadoes, snowstorms and floods.

In West Virginia (WV), for example, the 2nd Battalion 19th SFG(A) is commonly called upon to support civil authorities in state emergencies such as snowstorms and floods. The soldier's SF skills come into play as military strategists, engineers, medical technicians, and experienced senior leaders to the other organizations of the West Virginia Army National Guard (WVARNG). Their unique equipment also plays a critical role in their importance in these situations. Specialized vehicles, communication equipment, and extensive medical gear are significant elements in saving lives and property. In fact, these very soldiers were also decisive in the Hurricane Katrina operation. In this operation, they assisted in saving countless civilian lives and supported thousands of victims for months following the incident. The Adjutant General

(TAG) of WV or any other state would be hard pressed to find better suited soldiers to conduct these types of duties which occur on a regular basis all over the U.S.

By law and tradition, the Army National Guard connects local communities to the federal government by its mission and placement. Units are located in all 54 states and territories, and they have the capabilities, legal authority, and structure to respond to attacks on the homeland. The ARNG maintains over 3,000 armories around the nation.¹¹ This close relationship between the NG and their communities must be leveraged to ensure that local Guard units are prepared to respond to attacks and that they help to train other first responders in their communities.

National Guard State Area Commands (STARCs) are well situated to oversee the training of state and local first responders in weapons of mass destruction (WMD) consequence management. Currently, the National Guard maintains fifty seven Civil Support Teams (WMD-CST), trained and equipped to respond to a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) event. In many of these states, such as Ohio and WV, SF soldiers are key players on these teams. These units also provide valuable training to state and local first responders. The Guard also could help state and local authorities understand how to maintain equipment and sustain operations in a CBRN environment, and to plan for medical treatment after an attack (combat triage). Local health authorities are not adequately prepared to address the mass casualties that would result from CBRN events; many would not know, for example, when to enter an environment or stay away, or when to admit patients to a public facility or send them to an off-site, secure facility.¹²

The ARNG SF can operate under State Active Duty (SAD) or Title 32 status depending upon the situation and intent of the state Governor. During state active duty, soldiers are under the control of the Governor, commanded by the TAG and paid by the respective state. During Title 32 status, soldiers are under the control of the governor, commanded by the TAG but paid by the Federal government. However, this gives the ARNG distinct advantages in conducting Homeland Security missions. Title 32 is a federal status that allows for peacetime control by the state of territory and federal control when congress determines they are needed.¹³

The AC component operates exclusively under Title 10 status. This comes with significant drawbacks for the AC. The AC is subject to the “Posse Comitatus Act”. “Whoever except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the constitution or act of congress, willfully uses any part of the Army or Air Force as a posse comitatus or otherwise to execute the laws shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than 2 years or both.”¹⁴ As a consequence of “Posse Comitatus”, the AC can only be utilized for domestic missions that involve law enforcement applications after a federal declaration by the President of the United States (POTUS). These narrowly defined missions, authorized by a presidential declaration must be for a limited duration and only until such time as civil authority can resume responsibility.¹⁵ There is also the issue of politics in this situation. It is highly unlikely for a Governor to request Federal troops to come into his state. However, he has direct control of his ARNG soldiers and knows and understands their strengths and weaknesses.

Under Title 32 status, ARNG SF soldiers can perform law enforcement functions in time of emergency, the AC can only perform this function in a declared Presidential emergency for a period of (3) days. The ARNG SF soldiers are also present and part of the community. They know and understand the local politics and culture of the people they are assisting thereby making a seamless transition from civilian to soldier in the neighborhoods they live and work in on a daily basis. Whereas it would take days to move AC troops to an incident site or area, ARNG are always there.

Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) activities contributes to, and benefit from, effective information operations. Army Special Operational Forces (ARSOF) habitually contribute to Theater Security Cooperation activities which improve interoperability with allies and coalition partners and provide opportunities for the United States to examine existing relationships and seek new partnerships with nations committed to fighting global terrorism.¹⁶ TSC plans may include small unconventional footprints in countries not necessarily receptive to U.S. objectives. Additionally, the costs associated with these forward deployed forces are lower (both economically and politically) and more responsive to the political and resource constraints associated with large conventional forward-stationed bases.¹⁷

Through FID focused TSC engagement, ARNG SF will develop Partner Forces to internally combat insurgent and violent extremist organizations. The most successful FID actions prevent violence but when combat is needed, it is best done by the Partner Nation personnel with appropriate external support.

One recent and important example of a TSC mission by the ARNG SF is an Algeria mission conducted by 2nd Battalion 19th SFG in March of 2011. SF soldiers had

not operated in Algeria for over 10 years and it was a high priority country for both the US State Department and SOCOM. The mission was highly successful in Algeria in which a wide variety of military training was conducted.

Additional follow on operations were requested and subsequently scheduled both within the continental U.S. (CONUS) and in Algeria. In fact, Algerian soldiers came to West Virginia and conducted various types of training with ARNG SF soldiers such as mountain climbing, vehicle operations, and airborne operations. This relationship has developed so well the TAG of WV is pursuing a State Partnership Program with Algeria via the National Guard Bureau and State Department. This is one example where TSC promoted democracy, which improved the quality and quantity of increased stability in the region. As a byproduct, the intelligence on the Algerian military and the region was enhanced and Algerian relations dramatically improved which led to enhanced learning in the area of Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs), equipment, and organizations. The benefits of which may be leveraged in future endeavors. To illustrate the cost effectiveness, this mission cost less than \$410,000. This is an incredibly small price to pay for all that was achieved by such a small footprint of ARNG SF soldiers. With the dramatic reduction of funding and resources in the future as directed by the President of the United States and Secretary of Defense, this success should become the gold standard by which future Special Forces operations are measured.

The National Guard Counterdrug Program is one in which soldiers work with law enforcement agencies and community based organizations to interdict and perform anti-drug activities in the fight against illicit drugs. This program has been in effect since

1989 and currently over 2,500 soldiers support more than 5,000 agencies at the local, state, and federal levels preventing illicit drugs from being imported, manufactured and distributed.¹⁸ This program is executed by the governors of each of the 54 states and territories and supports the strategic goals of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). This program focuses on drug demand reduction, information sharing, and training. As the mission continues to expand, the nexus between drugs and terrorism has become more evident. The unique training and specialized equipment, and the corresponding capabilities, make the National Guard Counterdrug Program (NGCDP) an increasingly important part of the overall homeland defense and security missions.¹⁹

“Homeland Defense (HD) is the protection of the US territory, domestic population and critical infrastructure against military attacks emanating from outside the United States.”²⁰ In 1998, DoD commissioned a Tiger Team to develop a strategic plan to integrate the reserve components in the response to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).²¹ There are currently 27 Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams in the Army National Guard. The mission of these units is to assess a suspected nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological event in support of the Incident Commander (IC), advise civilian responders regarding appropriated actions, and facilitate requests for assistance to expedite arrival of additional state and federal assets to help save lives, prevent human suffering, and mitigate reduction or property damage.²²

Due to the extensive training and the diverse backgrounds of its Soldiers, Army National Guard Special Forces are able to train and advise military forces as well as law enforcement agencies such as State Police officers and Border Security agents. Working under Title 32 authorities, the ARNG SF soldier is unique among Active Duty

Special Forces counterparts in that the Title 32 SF Soldier can provide immediate and direct support to the United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM) or other State authorities on an “as needed” basis. Skill sets gained through experience as Guardsmen allow National Guard Special Forces to also engage government and non-governmental organizations vital to enhancing security and stability in developing nations.

The National Guard State Partnership Program (NGSPP) is a United States Department of Defense (USDoD) program managed by the National Guard that links U.S. states with partner countries around the world for the purpose of supporting the security cooperation objectives of the Geographic Combatant Commanders.²³ In this partnership with a foreign country’s military, an enduring and persistent relationship is formed over time. “It is a low cost, high impact, high value, high-leverage program that is relevant to our new Defense Strategy.”²⁴ The program benefits combatant commanders and the U.S. Ambassadors by building the international, civil-military partnerships and interoperability during peacetime. The SPP is an integral component of the Defense Department’s security cooperation strategy, the Geographical Combatant Commander’s theater engagement programs, and the US Ambassador’s Mission Strategic Resource Plans.²⁵ This is done by linking state capacities to the goals and objectives in the U.S. foreign assistance framework. It also enhances current and future coalition operation by encouraging and assisting partner nation support in international efforts. Secretary of Defense Panetta’s January 2012 strategic guidance identifies the National Guard SPP as a key partnership development effort.²⁶

This viable mutual security cooperation program will continue to expand in size and strategic importance to combatant commanders, ambassadors and broad U.S. agencies as demands increase in the future.²⁷ This traces back through the National Guard Bureau (NGB), DoD and the State Department. This dramatically reduces the need for more direct and costly U.S. military involvement in future contingencies. There are currently 63 partnerships among the states spread throughout 69 countries around the globe. “The US will create an environment that it can cooperate on issues of bilateral and global concerns, with the recognition that power, in an interconnected world, is no longer a zero-sum gain. We are expanding our outreach to emerging nations, particularly to those that can be models of regional success and stability.”²⁸

Recommendation

Reflecting the Joint Force of 2020, ARNG SF initiatives and training directives will nest with the principles outlined by providing a broad range of military capabilities and offering a flexible, versatile, and agile force at low cost. A ready NG costs only a fraction to maintain when compared to the same maintenance costs AC forces.²⁹ SFODAs are small twelve man teams able to infiltrate and exfiltrate to/from remote areas by land, sea or air. Once in a denied area, SF soldiers conduct operations for extended periods of time working autonomously and with minimal support while specifically executing the combatant commander’s security requirements. ARNG SF utilizes unconventional warfare and irregular warfare techniques to reduce an opponent’s military capability and achieve military victory through acquiescence, capitulation, or clandestine support during an existing conflict. It will be through unconventional warfare that SF counters terrorism, defeats and deters aggression; projects power in anti-access area-denial (A2/AD) environments while providing a

stabilizing presence synchronized with sustaining U.S. global leadership priorities for 21st century defense.

The new strategy clearly relies on an operational reserve by its stating the challenges facing the US today and in the future will require that we continue to employ National Guard and Reserve forces.³⁰ The future of Special Forces is filled with uncertainty but one thing is certain, it is sure to be busy. Whether it be combat operations in Afghanistan, stability operations in Bosnia, or counter-drug operations in Columbia, SF soldiers are expected to be professionals and prepared at all times to conduct any directed mission. ARNG SF soldiers will maintain their readiness level by conducting Homeland Defense, Theater Security Cooperation missions, and State Partnership Programs. Conducting these three missions will encompass seven of the eleven SF directed missions and their Mission Essential Task List (METL), thereby keeping the ARNG SF relevant in the mission of protecting America.

Conclusion

“The National Guard and Reserves offer a cost effective deep repository of such differentiated abilities”.³¹ The soldiers of the Army National Guard Special Forces are one of the best options available to the Department of Defense and the Nation to concurrently preserve military capability, capacity, and depth, while helping to decrease overall defense expenditures. Army National Guard Special Forces’ accomplishments clearly demonstrate this conclusion by their effectiveness and efficiency operating in every combatant command. The last ten years have been ones of excess and over indulgence in many ways; excessive and wasteful funding, inadequate use of personnel and a dependence on the newest equipment available. The future appears to be one where major change will take place. The mantra for all soldiers may well be to do more

with less, but the motto of the Special Forces is “Anything, Anytime, Anyplace.” The true character of the SF soldier may well be tested in the future. Special Forces will be used more often in non-kinetic missions as they are more flexible, scalable, and cost effective than conventional units. With their small footprint, advance skill sets, language capabilities and cultural specialization, they will become a unit of choice for a military facing dramatic reduction in both funding and personnel. The ARNG SF soldiers are well trained, motivated, patriotic, and value added assets to their respective states, to the Army and our great country. They will continue to train and prepare in every way possible to be ready when our nation calls on them in the future. The future role of the Army National Guard Special Forces is Homeland Defense, Theater Security Cooperation, and State Partnership Programs until they are called upon to again serve in combat. In this time of uncertainty, it is sure they will not have to wait for long.

Endnotes

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